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BELIEVE IN BERTIE HEADLINES GRADE III OLD FORESTER MINT JULEP 'CAP

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, June 7, 2017) – Klein Racing's homebred **Believe in Bertie**, first or second in 10 of her 12 starts and game runner-up in the \$300,000 Churchill Distaff Turf Mile Presented by Longines (GII) on the Kentucky Derby undercard, will carry the top weight of 122 pounds when she faces six other fillies and mares in Saturday's 41st running of the \$100,000 Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap (GIII) at Churchill Downs.

The Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap, a 1 1/16-mile test over the Matt Winn Turf Course for females, has been carded as Race 10 on Saturday's 11-race program with a post time of 5:21 p.m. (all times Eastern). Churchill Downs' traditional early June stakes event serves as a prelude to a simulcast of horse racing's third and final jewel of the Triple Crown, the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (GI) from New York's Belmont Park, which will be shown on "The Big Board" – Churchill Downs' massive outdoor video screen – and other television monitors throughout the facility after the final race at approximately 6:37 p.m. Post time for the first race at Churchill Downs is 12:45 p.m. and admission gates will open at 11:15 a.m.

Believe in Bertie enters the Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap in top form after she was edged by a head in the May 6 Churchill Distaff Turf Mile by the **Chad Brown**-trained favorite **Roca Rojo (IRE)**, a top contender in Saturday's Just A Game (GI) on the Belmont Stakes undercard.

The tough beat snapped a four-race win streak for the 4-year-old Louisiana-bred Believe in Bertie, which included a trio of stakes wins this winter at Fair Grounds led by a 7 3/4-length romp in the \$75,000 Pago Hop at one mile on turf and a half-length score in the \$72,000 Daisy Devine at 1 1/16 miles on grass.

The bay daughter of Langfuhr, who has earned \$393,682 from six wins and four seconds in a dozen starts, will attempt to land her first graded stakes win. Her connections – owner/breeder **Richard Klein**, trainer **Brad Cox** and jockey **Shaun Bridgmohan** – teamed to win last year's Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap with 5-year-old mare **Cash Control**. It was the second victory in the race for the Klein family, who also won the affair in 2013 with 4-year-old filly **Miz Ida**.

Foremost among Believe in Bertie's rivals are **Whitham Thoroughbreds'** 4-year-old homebred **Linda**, who finished third another 3 1/4 lengths back of top two in the Churchill Distaff Turf Mile for two-time Spring Meet stakes-winning trainer **Ian Wilkes**, and **Dom Felipe LLC's** Argentina invader, **Dona Bruja (ARG)**, a 5-year-old mare that has won eight of her 10 starts including a Group 1 triumph in the \$128,135 Copa de Plata Roberto Vasquez Mansilla Internacional over 1 1/4 miles on turf at San Isidro in her last start on Dec. 8. **Ignacio Correas IV** is her new trainer.

The complete Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap field from the rail out (with jockeys and assigned weight): Believe in Bertie (Bridgmohan, 122 pounds); **Majestic Angel** (Joe Rocco Jr., 113); **Sky My Sky** (Sophie Doyle, 116); **Dona Bruja (ARG)** (Declan Cannon, 119); **Lots o' Lex** (Calvin Borel, 114); **Dynazar** (Gabriel Saez, 115); and **Linda** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 121).

The Week Ahead

The simulcast of Saturday's Belmont Stakes is the centerpiece of an action-packed, four-day, Thursday-Sunday racing week at Churchill Downs.

Twilight Thursday

The **Twilight Thursday** abbreviated eight-race program starts at 5 p.m. and is highlighted by \$1 beers, food trucks (**Holy Mole**, **Red Top Gourmet Hot Dogs**, **Pollo**, **502 Café**, **Mark's Feed Store** and **Zoom Zoom Yum**), live music on the Plaza stage by '60's-inspired funk band **Vale** and a Wagering 101 tent for betting advice. There also is a \$56,000 jackpot carryover for the 20-cent minimum Single-6 Jackpot on Races 3-8.

Teacher Appreciation Day & Senior Day

Thursday also doubles as "Teacher Appreciation Day" at Churchill Downs where teachers can enjoy a reduced menu Chef's Table Buffet and soft drinks in Millionaires Row 6 for only \$24. A similar event is Friday for guests 60 and up but "Senior Day" is already sold out.

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Advance Belmont Stakes Wagering

Advance wagering on Saturday's 149th Belmont Stakes (Grade I) from Belmont Park will be offered all day Friday at Churchill Downs. Admission gates open Friday at 11:30 a.m. and the first of nine races is 12:45 p.m. General admission is \$3.

Five stakes races are carded Friday at Belmont's 11-race program, including the \$500,000 New York (GII) for fillies and mares at 1 ¼ miles on the inner turf and \$400,000 Belmont Gold Cup Invitational (GIII) for 4-year-olds and up at two miles on the Widener Turf Course. The two races go as Races 9 and 10 at 5:14 p.m. and 5:46 p.m., respectively, and will be televised on **NBCSN's** "Belmont Access" from 5-6 p.m. Similar to Churchill Downs' popular Oaks/Derby Double, the New York Racing Association (NYRA) will offer a pair of two-day doubles: the New York/Manhattan Double, which has a \$100,000 guarantee, and the \$300,000 guaranteed Belmont Gold Cup/Belmont Stakes Double.

Belmont Stakes Day at Churchill Downs

Saturday's 13-race program at Belmont is a stakes bonanza with 10 overall, including six Grade I events. The action begins at 11:35 a.m. so Churchill Downs will open its admission gates early at 11:15 a.m. NYRA has four guaranteed wagering pools Saturday: a \$500,000 Pick 5 (Races 1-5); \$250,000 Pick 3 (Races 3-5); \$500,000 Pick 6 (Races 6-11 ending with the Belmont Stakes); and \$1.5 million Pick 4 (Races 8-11).

The pomp of the Belmont Park action will be featured prominently at Churchill Downs on Saturday with the simulcast of the 1 ½-mile Belmont Stakes scheduled for 6:37 p.m. – which comes after the final live race at 5:51 p.m. Video and audio of a majority of the stakes races from Belmont will be shown between races on the track's massive Big Board when they don't conflict with live action.

NBCSN will air action from Belmont Park from 3-5 p.m. Belmont Stakes action shifts to **NBC** from 5-7 p.m.

Guests at Churchill Downs will have an opportunity to enjoy New York-themed food offerings in select dining rooms and concession stands. Also, **Levy Restaurants** will sell the Belmont Jewel – the official drink of the Belmont Stakes (includes Woodford Reserve, lemonade, pomegranate juice and orange zest) – complete with a commemorative Belmont Stakes glass. Last call for drinks on Saturday will be "Call to the Post" for the Belmont Stakes, and all dining rooms will remain open through the big race.

Free Admission for Super Regional Attendees

Churchill Downs also plans to show on its Big Board and select television monitors throughout the facility choice action from the **NCAA Division 1 Baseball Super Regional** between in-state rivals **University of Louisville Cardinals** and **University of Kentucky Wildcats**. The best-of-three series to clinch a trip to the College World Series in Omaha, Neb. will be held Friday-Sunday at noon at nearby **Jim Patterson Stadium**. All ticket-holders to those games will receive free general admission to Churchill Downs on those game days by showing their ticket stubs – perfect for any post-game celebration.

"Inside Churchill Downs" on ESPN 680/105.7

The hosts of "Inside Churchill Downs" – Churchill Downs Racetrack's **John Asher**, **Darren Rogers** and **Kevin Kerstein** – will preview Saturday's Churchill Downs and Belmont Park racing action with special guests on their 10-11 a.m. show that airs every Saturday on **ESPN 680/105.7**. Those outside the Louisville area can listen live online at <http://www.espnloouisville.com/> or download a podcast of the show after its completion.

Tickets

General Admission to Churchill Downs on Saturday is \$5, reserved seating is \$10 and reserved dining packages are \$47. General admission for the racing cards on Thursday (5 p.m. first post), Friday (12:45 p.m.) and Sunday (12:45 p.m.) is \$3, with reserved seating at \$10 and dining at \$38. Churchill Downs has a special **Stakes & Eggs** brunch in the Stakes Room on Sunday for \$45 (\$22 for children 12 and under). Tickets can be purchased in advance online at ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets.

Who's The Champ? Handicapping Contest

The "Who's the Champ? Handicapping Contest" returns Sunday. Interested participants can enter for \$35 (\$30 for TSC Elite members) for a chance to win the \$1,000 cash voucher first prize by placing mythical \$2 win and place bets on Races 3-8. Second place receives a \$500 voucher and third place is worth a \$200 voucher. Registration takes place between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on the Clubhouse second floor at the top of the Gate 17 escalators.

Meet Leaders

Twelve-time Churchill Downs champion jockey **Corey Lanerie** is the leading rider with 41 wins through the first 23 days of the 38-day Spring Meet – a whopping 18 more than his nearest rival **Brian Hernandez Jr.**

Steve Asmussen, the Hall of Fame horseman who has won a record 17 training titles at Churchill Downs, is tied with Louisville native **Brad Cox** atop the trainer standings with 12 wins each, one more than Brendan Walsh and Ian Wilkes.

Four owners are tied atop the Churchill Downs owners standings with four wins each: **Maggi Moss**, **Richard Rigney's Rigney Racing LLC**, **Janis R. Whitham's Whitham Thoroughbreds LLC** and perennial leading owners **Ken and Sarah Ramsey**, who seek their record-extending 29th local owners' title.

15 Days Left in the Meet; Strong Business Leads to Purse Increase

Only 15 racing dates remain at the Spring Meet. Closing Night is Friday, June 30. Churchill Downs Racetrack has raised overnight race purse offerings 10 percent over the final four weeks thanks to record Kentucky Derby week business levels. Purses for overnight races – which include overnight stakes, allowance, maiden special weight, claiming and maiden claiming events – will rise by an approximate blended average of \$3,209 per race.

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